

**"What has God entrusted to me, and how can I use it
faithfully?"**

Fall has arrived. The leaves are beginning to change, the days are getting shorter, and once again we find ourselves moving into another season of the life of our congregation. Fall is also a good time to pause and think about what God has entrusted to us.

When we hear the word stewardship, many of us probably think first about money or giving to the church. But stewardship is much bigger than that. Stewardship begins with recognizing that our lives are gifts from God. Our time, our abilities, our relationships, our work, our possessions, our communities, and even the world around us have been entrusted to us.

Psalms 24 reminds us, *"The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."* If we take those words seriously, stewardship becomes a way of looking at our whole lives. We begin to ask not only, "What do I have?" but also, "What has God entrusted to me, and how can I use it faithfully?"

This fall, we will have opportunities to explore that question together through adult education and conversations with one another. We will look at what Scripture says about stewardship, listen to some of Jesus' teachings, and talk together about how our faith shapes the way we use the gifts God has given us.

I don't want to be coy about this conversation; money is part of it! You may have heard this before, but the subject of money and possessions is a common point of discussion throughout the Old and New Testaments. The Bible has a great deal to say about money, possessions, wealth, generosity, and how we use what God has given us.

In the end, we are called to give thanks to God for the many gifts God has entrusted to us, and we are encouraged to consider how we might use those gifts in ways that honor God and serve our neighbors.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'J' and a cursive 'ohn'.



Pet Blessing Service

On Sunday, October 11th, we will hold a Pet Blessing Service outdoors at Noon. Pets hold a special place in our hearts, and this service is one way to remind us that God loves and cares for all of God's creatures, even the furry ones! You are welcome to bring your well-behaved and social pet. If your pet doesn't enjoy being around other animals or people, or has passed away, consider bringing a favorite photo.

To create a safe and stress-free environment, it is important that everyone follow these guidelines for participation in the Pet Blessing:

- *Keep pets on a short leash or kenneled at all times.*
- *Bring domestic animals only; no "exotic" pets.*
- *Pets are to stay outdoors while on church grounds.*
- *Parents must be present to assist small children with their pets. We ask that parents tend to the pet during the service.*
- *Be respectful of other pets. Since pets can be nervous in group situations, respect a pet's "space" by not crowding around them. If you wish to approach a pet, ask the owner first.*
- *Do not bring pet food or treats with you to the service.*
- *You are responsible for your pet at all times. Please have clean-up bags with you (just in case...).*

We hope to see you and your pet at this fun event! Share a favorite photo of your pet with us on the St. John's Facebook page!



I want to thank everyone who shared our Volunteer Appreciation Continental Breakfast on September 13. We are glad you joined us.

I especially want to thank my committee members who provided food and worked to serve everyone as well as some extra helpers who came along side and pitched in to help.

Again, thank you.

Cathy McAlexander



Parish Planning Council Members:

Executive Director	Nancy Passehl
Assistant Exec Director	Marv Hupp
Secretary	Audrey Luetscher
Treasurer	John Brennan
Evangelism Board	Gwen Ringelstetter
Fellowship Board	Cathy McAlexander
Lay Ministry Board	Josie Fentress
Member-at-Large	Mary Weeks
Parish Education Board	James Newman
Properties Board	John Ballweg
PR and Social Concerns	Melani Wheeler
Stewardship Board	Anne Klinkner
Women of ELCA	Marian DeGiovanni
Youth Board	Charlie Kruchten
Youth Member-at-Large	Kendra Frey

The Staff:

Please call the church office first when possible **(608) 643-2439**

Pastor: Tom Kreis tom@stjohnssaukprairie.org

(608) 577-4851

Pastor: Sally Williams sally@stjohnssaukprairie.org

(608) 643-7810

Intern: Roger Boettcher roger@stjohnssaukprairie.org

(608) 553-1454

Director of Music: Ruellene Seymour
ruellene@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Youth Director: Penny Johnson penny@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Custodian: John Hines john@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Office Administrator: Angie Updike office@stjohnssaukprairie.org

Sunday School Superintendent: Dale Clason
sundayschool@stjohnssaukprairie.org

St. John's Lutheran Church: (608) 643-2439

www.stjohnssaukprairie.org

Like us on Facebook at St Johns Lutheran Sauk Prairie

*Mission Statement: Christ, our strength and refuge,
calling us to serve*

St. John's Lutheran Church
100 Oak Street
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin 53578



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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Christ,
our strength
and refuge,
calling us
to serve

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Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry

Food, paper products and cleaning supplies may be brought to the table in the gathering area at any time. These items are distributed to many families in the Sauk Prairie community. The food pantry always needs:

- Toilet paper
- Laundry and dish soap (smaller bottles of dish soap, please)
- Condiments (especially ketchup and mayonnaise, jelly)
- Canned vegetables and fruits
- Baby food and formula
- Box meals (e.g., Hamburger Helper)
- Canned meals (e.g., spaghetti, ravioli, etc.)
- Baking supplies (white and brown sugar, flour, oil)
- Canned Meats, Pastas, Pork & Beans, Chili, Sloppy Joes, or similar
- Diapers – sizes 5 and 6

Thank you for sharing with others.

Birthday Greetings

We hope you take a moment to send greetings to the following people who have birthdays in October. The day is in parentheses.



Norma Newman (4)
11020 Thousand Oaks Dr
Huntersville, NC 28078

Jim Sauer (10)
88 Norfolk Pine Ln
Naples, FL 34114-8309

Dorothy Halverson (18)
9456 County Road Y
Sauk City, WI 53583

John Mast (25)
205 First St.
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

Karen Bader (27)
N2388 Trails End Rd
Lodi, WI 53555

90th plus Birthday Celebration

Join us on October 25th as we rejoice with our St. John's family members who have celebrated 90 or more birthdays. We will have warm wishes cards to sign in our gathering area, along with special treats at coffee hour.



	Women of the Church News	
	<u>Lydia Circle</u> Thursday, October 14 at Carol Benson's, 713 Madison St., Apt. 11, Sauk	1:00pm
	<u>Martha Circle</u> Thursday, October 1, The Pines, Front door Activity room	9:30am
	<u>Ruth Circle</u> Monday, October 12, St John's Library	9:00am
	<u>Sarah/Mary Circle</u> Tuesday, October 6, St. John's Library	9:30am

We are now on our second lesson by Rev. Tiffany Chaney on "Bold Faith on an Unexpected Journey". Ruth, a Moabite widow, chooses to remain with her mother-in-law Naomi and step into an unknown future. Darlene Holl, Mary Weeks, Marian DeGiovanni and Kathy Lester will be leading Study.

All of our Lutheran World Relief kits have been packed up and they have been sent to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Madison. We are very grateful to Lon Kaderavek, Jackie Frosch, Kris Frey, Angie Updike and Pastor Sally for loading up all the boxes into the trailer and to John Ballweg for driving the trailer into Madison. Of course, also a big thanks to all the people who purchased and assembled all of the items and packed them into boxes. The quilters have been working hard all year making beautiful quilts. The numbers are as follows: 425 Quilts; Lydia Circle-20 Sewing Kits; Sarah/Mary Circle-109 Personal Care Kits; Ruth Circle-72 Baby Kits; Martha Circle-208 School kits. We are SO grateful to Thrivent who donated \$250 to each Circle for the kits and also to the Quilters which was a tremendous help. MANY THANKS TO ALL THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE who donated the many items needed for this very important project.

The Thank Offering Service will be on November 15. This is a special opportunity to honor God by donating, thanking Him for all He has done for us. Put your donation in an envelope marked THANKOFFERING. There will be a marked basket outside the sanctuary for this purpose. There will be another reminder in the November issue of the Visitor.

Martha Circle visited Special Friends in August and September. Sarah/Mary Circle will visit them in October and November.

Bible Study Leaders Meeting for October will be September 29th at 9:00 a.m. Bible Study Leaders meeting for November will be October 27th at 9:00 am.

With Sincere Sympathy

We offer our condolences to:

- Jason and Taysheedra Mahoney on the death of Jason's mother, Debbie Mahoney.

THANK YOU!!

To my dear special church family-ALL of you for always being there for me, Thank you!!!

The Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

What used to be a red-head with freckles is now 90 with white hair and fortunate.

Love, Gloria Moles



JUST BAKERY

A JustDane Initiative

Just Bakery will be back on Sunday, October 18 between our worship services. Stop in the fellowship hall to check them out!

Stock the Schools

In cooperation with the Sauk Prairie community, St. John's is collecting items to be given to Sauk Prairie students in need. Each month we will have different items to collect that will help our local students. October's items **Winter Gear:** Coats-Adult/child sizes, Snow pants-Adult/child sizes, Boot-Adult/child sizes, Waterproof gloves and mittens and Hats-All sizes. Look for the display in the gathering area to drop off your donations. Thank you.



St. John's is scheduled to deliver Mobile Meals from the Sauk Prairie Hospital two weeks in October. The dates are October 12 – 16 and

October 19 – 23. Delivery time is usually one hour with pick up time 11:20-11:30am. For more details and to volunteer, please see the kiosk in the front gathering area of the church. If you are interested and have questions, please contact Melani Wheeler at wheelermelani6@gmail.com.

Community Resources

Maplewood has free resources for the community. Simply come to Maplewood, 245 Sycamore St., Sauk City, during the designated date and time.

1. Grief & Loss Support Group (every 3rd Tuesday 3-4pm)
2. Caretakers Alzheimer/Dementia support group (every 4th Tuesday 3-4pm)



Volunteers Needed

Are you a High School Student or Adult interested in bringing the Sunday St. John's Zoom service to residents at The Pines. (Maplewood would love volunteers too.) The Zoom service is shown on the activity room large TV. Volunteering involves turning on the service (it is easy, just a few clicks) and helping to open the prepackaged communion kits during the service also. High Schoolers-This is a time that can be counted toward your Silver Cord Award.

Questions? Contact Mary Weeks at 608-370-4999 or Penny Johnson. Sign up for this opportunity is here:

<https://signup.com/go/ejcrgeA>

SPECIAL PRAYER

We invite you to pray for peace on the 20th day of each month. On October 20, please repeat the following prayer:

Dear God,

May we honor the beauty in every ending and trust the promise of each new beginning. May we walk forward with open hearts, knowing we are always being led home.

Amen

~Maria Shriver

Dear Friends in Christ,



As an election approaches, the ELCA's social statement, **Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All** reminds us that our faith calls us not away from civic life, but into it. The social statement describes civic engagement as part of our Christian calling to love our neighbors, seek justice and work for the common good.

The ELCA and other partners have put together a number of resources to help us reflect on our role as faithful followers of Christ as we live and serve as citizens of this world. I invite you to take a look at some of these as you discern how Jesus calls you to live in this intersection of faith and civic life.

Interfaith Alliance: <https://voteissacred.org/>

ELCA social statement: <https://resources.elca.org/faith-and-society/civic-life-and-faith/>

ELCA Advocacy Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/elcaadvocacy>

ELCA Advocacy Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/elcaadvocacy>

ELCA in Society: <https://www.elca.org/how-we-serve/elca-in-society>

Wisconsin Council of Churches: <https://www.wichurches.org/>

There are a number of other resources. If you're interested in more feel free to reach out!

This election season offers an opportunity to put that calling into practice as we approach the election with prayer, discernment, honesty and a concern for the well-being of all. As we prepare to vote, may our words and actions reflect Christ's call to love our neighbors and serve the common good.

In Christ's Peace,

Bats and Belfries

I don't know which is your opinion: that bats are startling and frightening, that they are cute, warm, and cuddly, or that they are important insect eaters and part of God's creation to be treasured and protected.

You may have heard that St. John's Lutheran church has bats. Churches have bats; they have from the time of Christ. In fact, did you know that one reason we cover the bread and wine is from days when worship and communion meetings were in caves and stone buildings where things might drop into these elements. One thing that might drop in could come from bats...

Bats are mentioned in the Old Testament as unclean flying creatures forbidden for consumption and as symbols of desolate, dark places where idols are cast away. We pretty much agree that we don't wish to have bats attending Sunday School or worship. As a congregation, part of our preparation for Sunday School is to make sure all the rooms are neat, clean, and bat-free for the first day of class. There is enough of the unknown and surprising that will be occurring without having to deal with the little furry, flying, symbols of Halloween.

I had the distinct privilege to be present for Sunday School teacher orientation. I sometimes think you need to have 'bats in your belfry' to consider being a teacher. Of course, I am a retired teacher myself—so go figure. But this group of dedicated volunteers has come together, preparing to care for, teach, and inspire our young people. They spend countless hours preparing lessons, gathering materials, setting up classrooms, and organizing to be ready for their next Sunday School class. Certainly, each of our teachers, assistants and helpers are living saints! Think of the wisdom, kindness, courage, creativity, strength, and love which they bring to those they teach. That they are going to work with our startling, unexpected, and wonderfully exuberant kids. God bless them! Keep the bats healthy and outside. Let's all keep the teachers, their families, St. John's congregation, and all our students in our prayers.

Pax,
Roger Boettcher, Pastoral Intern

Hello
My name is

Intern



MEETING

Congregational Meeting

On November 8, at 9am, we will have a congregational meeting to approve our 2027 budget, elect members to our Parish Planning Council (PPC), elect three voting members to attend the Synod Assembly in 2027 and to elect three congregational members to serve on our Nomination Committee for 2027.

We will be voting to fill the open positions on our PPC. Our nominees are: Executive Assistant Director – **Open**, Properties Board –Lon Kaderavek. The rest of our PPC agreed to continue their terms.

We will also vote on congregational members to attend our Synod Assembly next spring/summer. We need three adults and can have one youth member. Our nominees for Synod Assembly Voting Members and nominees for the Nomination Committee will be taken from the floor on the day of the meeting.

All active members of St. John's are invited to attend this important meeting (the ELCA defines "active members" as those who have both given of record and communed at least one time in the previous year.)

Reading of the Congregational Meeting Minutes

In lieu of the reading of the minutes from the November 9, 2025 Congregational Meeting, the minutes are listed here. Please take the time to read through them before attending the meeting on November 8, 2026. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and/or make corrections at that meeting.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING November 8, 2025

(In building and via Zoom platform)

PPC Executive Director, Nancy Passehl, confirmed at least 50 members were present and called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2026 budget, vote on nominees for the Parish Planning Council, approve nominating committee members for PPC recruiting, and approve Synod Assembly volunteers.

The minutes of the November 2024, Congregational meeting were published in the November Visitor as well as in the October 26 and November 2, 2025 Sunday bulletins in lieu of reading them at the meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as provided was made by Janelle Hupp and 2nd by Donna Nelson. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy described the 2026 budget changes that were printed and available for review in the bulletin. She pointed out the salary budgeted follows the synod guidelines for salary which is based on years of experience. There is a difference in the budget this year due to Pastor Tom and Karen living in the parsonage. There is also not a youth trip in 2025 so we do not have that budget concern. Our intent is to continue with an intern in June 2026 and therefore we budgeted for 1/2yr salary and ½ yr living expenses if needed for the intern. The total budget is down by 8%. John Brennan is here if you have specific questions. A motion to approve the budget was made by Bob Nelson and 2nd by Melani Wheeler. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Nancy thanked our outgoing board chairs (Tracy Pape, Sean Jager, Gina Varley, Roger Seymour, Todd Wyttenbach, and Cathy Yanke) for their years of service. She then moved on to list nominees of Audrey Luetscher--Secretary, Anne Klinkner--Stewardship, Mary Weeks--Member at large, Josie Fentress--Lay Ministry, Charlie Kruchten--Youth Board. Jerry Kaufmann made a motion to approve Kendra Frey as Youth Member at Large. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Cathy McAlexander and 2nd by Alice Chenoweth. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Third, we approved the nominating committee to recruit members for additional PPC members that includes the Lead Pastor, three congregational members (self-nominated) that include Kathy Lovell, Dianne Brice, and Lon Kaderavek. Three PPC members will be determined. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Marv Hupp and 2nd by Mary Weeks. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Our final topic was to accept nominations for attendees to the Synod Assembly in May 2026. We can send 3 adults (either 2 males and 1 female or 2 females and 1 male), 1 young adult (under 30 years old) and 1 high school youth. Our Lead Pastor and Pastor Sally are both voting members. Diane Bryce self-nominated as well as Susan Heide and James Newman. The under 30 category person will be determined. Nancy Passehl will find an additional person to attend. A motion to approve the nominees was made by Darlene Holl and 2nd by Tom Varley. If any adult under 30 or a high school youth is interested, please contact Aletha Ballweg or Jackie Frosch in the church office. Other news: Nancy acknowledged that we had a very busy and active year and thanked our TNT and the call team for their work.

Our year with Intern Elise shows St John's is a teaching congregation and we are very proud of it.

Thanks to our entire staff for working so hard this year to keep us up and running and even more importantly thriving. Our PPC is great and had a great year of volunteering over and over. We are very happy to have Pastor Tom aboard. Especially Pastor Sally who took the lead. In recognition of all Pastor Sally has done she will be taking an extended vacation time January 20th for four weeks, to renew and rev up for the coming year. She is not leaving, not on sabbatical, just using some very much earned time away in combination with her vacation.

Properties- A huge thank you to John Ballweg and committee for overseeing our updates to the parsonage and the entire building inside and out. The Properties budget went up by almost \$14,000 over last year. While that is a very large increase, costs like natural gas, utilities, and insurance are just a few things that are more expensive. We are very grateful for the contributions this year to refurbish the parsonage to make this a comfortable home for Pastor Tom and Karen.

Looking further ahead with Properties, other projects include replacing/rewiring the sanctuary light fixtures, sealing and re-stripping the parking lot, replacing blinds on the windows in the educational wing, and replacing the rubber membrane roof on the Fellowship Hall. We are doing advance planning for some of those projects now and will share additional information when we feel it's time to move forward.

Nancy then thanked everyone for the support and appreciation shown to all of us and your willingness to continue to be involved, volunteer, give in time, talents and finances. We are an amazing St John's. The chosen word for 2025 was "transparency" and I feel we did a great job at being open, honest, and forthcoming. Our word for 2026. It is "VISIONARY". Let's look above and beyond, reach for the stars and dream and we will achieve our dreams with everyone's help.

At 9:23 am, Bob Nelson made the motion to adjourn the meeting and was 2nd by Donna Nelson. Director Nancy Passehl asked if there were any objections and after receiving none, she adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Cathy Yanke

St. John's Budget for 2027 We will be voting on the 2027 Budget at our Congregational meeting on November 8. A more itemized listing of the various board budgets will be available in the church office once approved by the PPC.

PROGRAM	BUDGETED 2026	BUDGETED 2027	% CHANGE
Administration	\$426,666.00	\$435,013.00	1.48%
Lay Ministry	\$9,350.00	\$10,000.00	6.95%
Evangelism	\$500.00	\$600.00	20.00%
Stewardship	\$2,400.00	2,300.00	-4.10%
PR & Social Concerns	\$3,000.00	3,300.00	10.00%
Parish Education	\$12,070.00	\$11,995.00	-0.62%
Youth Board	\$4,800.00	\$29,000.00	504.17%
Fellowship	\$2,400.00	\$2,400.00	0.00%
Properties	\$63,800.00	\$88,875.00	39.30%
Lutheran Church Women	\$2,250.00	\$2,750.00	22.22%
Benevolence	\$45,400.00	\$53,900.00	18.72%
Total	\$574,636.00	\$640,133.00	11.40%

Update and Organization Structure of the Parish Planning Boards

As you know we finished our brainstorming sessions asking for input on what you as members see the present and the future of St John's. We had great attendance and interest so thank you. So we are taking those ideas and developing a Strategic Plan that will be easy to understand and filled with hope for the future.

During these sessions, we were asked to do temple talks informing our Congregation how we operate as a church and why they would want to consider being on our boards and volunteering their time and efforts needed to attend meetings and participate in events.

So the plan today is to give you a brief overview of the organizational structure of St John's which is defined in our bylaws. (I tried to find a way to make this exciting for all of you but unless I can do a song and dance it will just be a "useful" talk.

- The Parish Planning Council has specific descriptions spelled out in the constitution and by-laws for each board that they must follow. I was specifically asked "Who has the power of this Congregation. The answer is "you", the members of the congregation. For example, we recently had a congregational meeting to hire Pastor Tom, we will have another in November to nominate folks for the nomination committee, attend Synod meetings, vote in new PPC members and approve the budget.
- The structure of the PPC consists of the Executive Chairperson who serves a 2-year term, the Asst Executive Director who also serves a 2-year term and then serves the following 2 years as the Executive Director.
- The Executive Committee consists of the Pastors, Exec Director, Asst Exec Director, the Secretary and the Treasurer. This team guides the PPC and leads the Congregation. (Marv Hupp, Audrey Luetscher, John Brennan and myself along with Pastors Sally and Tom))

The boards are as follows: Each board serves 2 yrs and can serve up to 3 terms, with the exception of the Exec Board. PPC meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6pm. The boards meet monthly but can do via email sparingly if needed.

- Lay Ministry Board— Josie Fentress—Works closely with the music director and pastors to coordinate all facets of the worship service. (liturgies, choirs, ushers, greeters, readers)
- Fellowship— Cathy McAlexander—All social events, coffee, welcome and good byes. Also, the Palm Sunday breakfast is organized and handled by this board. They also keep the kitchen stocked.
- Stewardship— Anne Klinkner—members of this board conduct an annual Stewardship Response Program. Assemble the annual congregational budget and more.
- Evangelism— Gwen Ringelstetter—Board members contact people regarding membership via letters or contacts to visitors, new members, college students.
- Buildings and Properties— John Ballweg—caring for the grounds and the facility.

- PR & Social Concerns— Melani Wheeler—Works as our public relations affiliate with the community, other churches, provides services such as “Just Bakery”.
- Parish Education Board— James Newman—Works to define Christian education for both youth and adults.
- Women of the ELCA— Marian DeGiovanni—works with the women of the church, bible studies, the circles and more.
- Youth Board – Charlie Kruchten—Promotes events designed to increase participation of the youth from 6th- post high school. Goals include increasing public service and church service participation.
- Member at Large— Mary Weeks—This person is the ears and eyes for the PPC- in other words the link to the Congregation and make themselves available for communication.
- Youth Member at Large— Kendra Frey—link to the youth – brings reports monthly of events and issues that are happening.

I could go on and on about each of these boards. First of all, thank you to our present PPC members. They have been phenomenal and very supportive.

We need and would love to have more members on our teams and members to lead our teams. So in order to help you understand these boards we will be available on Rally Sunday. Each of our boards and the Executive Team will have a table explaining what we do and a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in leading these boards or members of their boards. In the next few months, each board will do a short temple talk explaining what they do in hope of gaining understanding and interest.

When I was asked four years ago to take on the Assistant Executive position, I really had no idea on what to do or how to do it. But today, I would say it is easy, (not all of the time) but it can be easy only because I have great support.

We need your talents, your interest and “new blood” as they say. New folks make us think deeper and outside of the box we are used to operating the same old way because it works.

Please ask any of us, any questions, someone in our sessions said “we just need to be asked”. We are asking and would love you to join us.

Nancy Passehl
Executive Director

Adult Education News

What Has God Entrusted to Us? What comes to mind when you hear the word **stewardship**? Money? Giving? The church budget? This Sunday, we will spend some time looking at stewardship from a broader biblical perspective. **What has God entrusted to us, and how are we called to use those gifts?** We will explore what Scripture and Jesus have to say about our time, talents, relationships, possessions, creation, and yes, our money. This will be an opportunity to talk, listen, ask questions, and consider how our faith shapes the way we live each day. Everyone is welcome. We meet at 9:15am in the library on this topic through October 18. Come join the conversation! All are welcome!

Sunday School News

Sunday School

We had our first day of Sunday School on September 27. It is wonderful having the children back in the classrooms. Sunday School is in need of egg cartons. If you have any you wish to donate, please leave them on the table in the children's library in the Sunday School hallway.

Middle and High School News

Confirmation Classes

The St. John's Confirmation program has begun! All church members and friends are welcome to join us for a Fellowship Meal at 5:30pm on nights when we have confirmation class. We ask for a \$2 contribution per person. If you can help set-up or clean-up, please contact Donna Nelson. Confirmation classes start at 6:00pm. If you know a student in 7th, 8th or 9th grade student who would like to join confirmation, they are welcome to contact Penny at any time. You can find the full confirmation calendar at <https://tinyurl.com/ConfirmCal>

Worship Job Sign-Up

Each student needs to complete 3 Worship Jobs from October through January. Your student may complete multiple jobs on any one Sunday or spread them across several Sundays. Students are welcome to complete more than 3! This is the time for our youth to learn the gift of serving others. If your student is struggling to complete their worship jobs, please contact Penny for help. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/JobsOctThruJan>

Trip to the Corn Maze

St. John's Middle and High School students and friends (chaperones needed too!) will travel to the Treinen Farm Corn Maze on Wednesday, October 28, 2026. We'll leave the St. John's parking lot at 4:45pm – and take the bus to the Corn Maze. We'll return approximately 7:15pm. Must sign up before 10/20/26 at <https://tinyurl.com/StJCornMaze>

Food Pantry

St. John's Ninth Graders are invited to help at the Sauk Prairie Food Pantry on Wednesday, October 14, 2025, from 5:00-7:00pm. Please note that this time overlaps with confirmation time, and students will be excused from class if they volunteer. We are looking for 5 ninth-grade students and 2 chaperones to fill these spots. We'll help load groceries into bags, load bags into vehicles, and at least one youth/adult pair will help direct traffic. A Food Pantry Board Member is there to help direct the work, during the entire shift. You must be able to drop-off your student at the Food Pantry at 5:00pm. Please register today: <https://tinyurl.com/NinthGradeFoodPantry>

Sauk Prairie Pack Event

The Sauk Prairie Pack Event is held at the end of October this year, at Grand Avenue Elementary School. This event contributes to the work of Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) a Christian non-profit feeding God's starving children hungry in body and spirit. Nutrition allows children to grow, thrive and develop to their full potential. Volunteers will hand-pack the meals which are donated to FMSC food partners around the world, so that kids are fed and lives are saved! If you are called to donate, please drop off any amount to the church office with a "Pack Event" note.

Your student is invited to join the St. John's Team at the Sauk Prairie Pack Event on October 30, 3:30-5:30 PM. Adults needed too! We will work to turn hunger into hope by packing nutritious meals for hungry children around the world. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/StJPackEvent>, before 10/20/26.

We are encouraged to act on behalf of the poor with the confidence that we are helping further God's work in the world to eliminate hunger, which disproportionately affects children and has a negative impact on their health, education, and ability to obtain a better life. I hope you and your student can join us!

PARISH PLANNING COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: September 1, 2026

Present: Nancy Passehl, Marv Hupp, Pastor Tom, Pastor Sally, Audrey Luetscher, Anne Klinkner, Cathy McAlexander, Charlie Kruchten, James Newman, John Ballweg, John Brennan, Marian DeGiovanni, Josie Fentress, Mary Weeks, Intern Roger Boettcher

Absent: Melani Wheeler, Kendra Frey

Call to Order/Opening remarks:

Devotion was given by Audrey Luetscher. Meeting was called to order at 6:10pm by Nancy Passehl. Nancy asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda was made by John Ballweg, 2nd by Mary Weeks, motion carried.

Secretary Minutes:

The August 4, 2026, minutes were submitted online by Audrey Luetscher. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Marian DeGiovanni and 2nd by Marv Hupp. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report: John Brennan

Current Month Income	Current Month Expenses	Current Month Balance	Year-to-Date Income	Year-to-Date Expenses	Year-to-Date Budget
\$33,524	\$31,703	\$2,181	\$355,528	\$323,167	\$383,088

John Brennan reviewed the Treasurer's report and a motion to accept the report was made by Anne Klinkner, 2nd by Cathy McAlexander. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Evangelism: No report

Fellowship: Cathy McAlexander

- We held a welcome reception for Intern Roger on July 19.
- John & Linda Hines provided the coffee treats on August 16.
- August 23 Ruth Dresser provided the birthday cake in honor of her 98th & Gloria Moles 90th birthdays.
- The Volunteer Appreciation Continental breakfast is planned for September 13, in honor of all who have served St. John's in any capacity. All are welcome.

Lay Ministry: Josie Fentress

Member reports-

- Gina-recruiting ushers for two services each Sunday again
- Ruellene-gearing up for fall practices

- Lisa-setting up online sign-up
- Patty-nothing to report
- Donna-brought up flower/coffee contributions-these go directly into the general fund
- Pastor Tom-brought "Grant" to our attention. Young man who comes into church late and leaves early. He does not want a bulletin. Has been warming up to Pastor Tom.

Old Business-

- Will continue linking online sign-ups in the future
- Safety and risk management continue to meet
- Visitor articles must be submitted by the 20th of each month (or before) to Angie office@stjohnssaukprairie.org
- Please sign pink slips when submitting for payment.
- Hymnal repair project is complete. Special thanks to Linda Michaels, Ruellene Seymour, Patty Barritt, Donna Knickmeyer, Marian DeGiovanni, Angie Updike and Josie Fentress. Project completed followed by a pizza lunch.

New Business-

- Volunteerism push on Sept. 20. Asked board members to set up a station to recruit volunteers.
- Budget proposals-add \$50 to music budget and flower budget needs to be increased.
- Christmas candles and supplies have been ordered.
- Kiosk sign-up info needs to be updated. Angie is doing this.

Upcoming Dates-

- RIC speakers Aug. 15 and 16, Messiah Lutheran Church 5202 Cottage Grove Rd., Madison. 5:00pm on Sat. and 8:15 and 10:30 am on Sun.
- Church budget due on August 26
- Volunteer breakfast at 11:30 on September 13
- Back to 8:00 and 10:30am services on Sept. 13
- Rally Day Sept. 20
- Reformation Sunday, October 25

Member at Large: Mary Weeks-no report

Parish Education: James Newman

No meeting in August

Properties: John Ballweg

- John has been getting options & estimates for solving the current bat problem in the education wing.
- Properties budget is increased this year due to some trees that need trimming & new cost for the parking lot maintenance.

PR & Social Concerns: Melani Wheeler

Stewardship Board: Anne Klinkner

- The Stewardship Board reviewed the July 2026 financial statements.
- Monthly Theme The Stewardship Board reviewed the monthly theme for September 2026. The theme is Fellowship and Lay Ministry. Todd will make some additions to this and forward it to Angie so it can be publicized in September 2026 Visitor and placed in the Narthex.
- Budget Process Budgets from the various boards are trickling in. The Stewardship Board prepared the Stewardship budget and the Benevolence budget during the meeting.
- Stewardship Campaign Stewardship Sunday will be October 18, 2026. Adult Education sessions with themes around Stewardship will be held on the following dates: 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18
- Anne will contact the South Central Synod to see if they have a representative that can come for a temple talk on Legacy Giving.
- John Brennan will have a table for people to learn about and sign-up for electronic giving on Stewardship Sunday.
- Anne will prepare the letter for our annual Stewardship Campaign & contact James Newman to see what is needed from the Stewardship Board for Rally Sunday.
- Year Round Stewardship Plan for 2027 During 2027, we will dive into detail on some of the specific projects St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church has funded. Examples pertinent to the Stewardship Board are Synod Support and Lutheran Social Services.
- Admin Manual Review The proposed changes to the Admin Manual were reviewed. Anne will make changes & distribute the document to the Stewardship Board for their review & approval at the September meeting.

Women of the ELCA: Marian DeGiovanni

- WELCA Board did not meet in August, but circles have continued working on the school, fabric & baby kits for LWR. These kits will be loaded Friday, September 11 & taken to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Madison on the 12th. They will then be transported to the Minneapolis warehouse.
- Our next Circle Bible studies for 3 months will center on BOLD FAITH ON AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Youth Committee: Charlie Kruchten-no report

Youth Member: Kendra Frey

- August 28th we had our first home football game! At a certain point in the game everyone threw colored chalk in the air.
- Our first day of school is Tuesday, September 1st.

Pastor Tom's report:

- TDS update: Phones have been installed. Training will take place on Wednesday, September 2nd.
- Internship: Intern Roger has been doing a good job. We meet weekly on Monday mornings and he is meeting with his internship committee regularly. His goals are being developed and will be finished shortly.
- New Members: We have had several more people inquire about joining St. John's, which is encouraging. If interest continues, we may plan another new member class in the fall or early winter.
- 2027 Budget: The Admin budget has been submitted.
- Memorial Committee: In early July, I met with the Memorial Committee & the Stewardship Team to discuss how to move forward with memorials. Those conversations were put on hold because of personal circumstances affecting several members. I plan to resume those discussions in August after I return from vacation
- Adult Education and Stewardship: We are working on several weeks of adult education related to Stewardship this fall.
- In conversations with Professor Craig Nesson from Wartburg Seminary, to join us for worship on Reformation Sunday, as well as host adult education.

Pastor Sally's report:

- Safety Update: This process is taking much longer than anticipated! First order of business is getting our practices with the minors solidified for September 13th teacher training. Goal is to have a more detailed handbook for all volunteers & staff. Currently comparing between our current children & youth practices/policies with what is recommended by safety experts. Parish Ed & staff will look at differences, and then we'll pass it along to PPC, to determine what needs to officially be added to our current document.
- Please check out the dates for education programming in bulletins/Visitor. **I'd love to see our PPC members wandering around on Rally Day introducing yourselves to parents & students you don't know.** Same for confirmation orientation. If

you're able to help out a couple times with the confirmation meal on Wednesday nights you would be greatly appreciated.

- We're excited to have four more baptisms coming up between now and the end of December. Again, please be sure you're welcoming these young families to our congregation.

Intern Report: Roger Boettcher

- I continue to meet weekly with Pastor Tom.
- The Lay Internship committee met on August 25. With their help, and the assistance of Pastor Tom, my internship goals are nearly complete. These goals are the main component of my Learning Service Agreement, which is the first written report I will submit to Wartburg Theological Seminary.
- Janice and I continue our participation in the Ukulele group.
- August was my month to lead worship at Maplewood, Maplewood Village and the Pines.
- Text Study on Zoom every Tuesday at noon. I meet with the other pastors in our conference.
- My second sermon was on August 16 and I help lead worship on Sundays when I'm not preaching.
- I have made pastoral care visits to Sauk Prairie Healthcare Hospital, Maplewood, Maplewood Village and the Pines.
- I have outlined and am creating lesson plans for my first Adult Education series. This will be on "Miracles" in the Bible. It begins in late October.
- I stop by the Quilters group most Wednesdays. Janice is a regular part of that group now, and I have learned a few things like how to tie the knots.
- I met with the WELCA Bible Study Leaders to plan this month's Bible studies.
- I participated in an Internship Support Group Zoom with my seminary colleagues.
- Other meetings have included: Parish Planning, Stewardship, Parish Education, Lay Leadership and Staff meetings.
- I am in the early stages of planning an Advent worship service, likely to be the first week of Advent, Wednesday, December 2.

Old Business:

- RIC update from James-Preparing a list to start discussing RIC with the congregation. Anyone interested may watch Micah Meyers presentation at Messiah Lutheran Church, Cottage Grove Rd., Madison on the church "VIMEO"
- Phone system update-Tom-Training Wednesday on use of the new system.

- Budget for 2027-Anne 2026 budget was \$574K. 2027 budget is \$632K (increase due to \$15K Youth Trip cost). A motion was made by Marv Hupp for a preliminary approval of the 2027 budget as written, pending the cost of the bat remediation. James Newman 2nd the motion. Motion carried.
- There will be a follow-up email vote, after John completes the cost for the bat problems.
- Visionary update/strategic plan-Nancy plans to complete soon.

New Business:

- Bat update-The youth room seems to be the primary source. Repairing the current openings in the building & proper clean-up is costly. As there are health hazards involved we want to do this safely.
- Stewards for October & November are completed.
- Nomination for PPC update-Tom is working on the list.
- Temple talks-first one on September 13. Nancy will explain the council structure briefly and discuss how to go forward for temple talks.
- The PPC Executive team will be present at Rally Day 9/20 to explain how the council works. Other committees will be available to discuss what their job is and encourage individuals to participate by sitting in a few meetings and possibly consider joining a group.

Motion to adjourn was made by Josie Fentress and 2nd by Marv Hupp. Motion carried. Meeting ended at 7:30pm. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Addendum to Budget

9/10/2026 Email vote is complete for the changes to the proposed budget for 2027.

Anne Klinkner made a motion to accept the 2027 budget changes that occurred due to increased cost for proper abatement of the current bat problem. Second by John Ballweg. Motion carried.

Next meeting will be October 6, 2026, at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Audrey Luetscher